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## Letter dated 6 November 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith the text of the Bishkek Mountain Platform which was formulated during the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (28 October-1 November 2002) (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would circulate the text of the Bishkek Global Mountain Platform as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 86.

(*Signed*) Kamil **Baialinov**
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of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations

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**Annex to the letter dated 6 November 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

[Original: English and Russian]

# Bishkek Global Mountain Summit 28 October–1 November 2002

# Bishkek Mountain Platform

## 1. Objectives

The Bishkek Mountain Platform is an outcome of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, the culminating global event of the International Year of Mountains 2002. The objective of the Platform is to continue with existing initiatives and to develop substantive efforts beyond the Year by mobilizing resources, giving orientation and guidance, and promoting synergies. In particular, it will provide a framework for stakeholders and others to contribute to sustainable development in the world's mountain regions. It will enable them to act together at all levels from local to global to improve the livelihoods of mountain people, to protect mountain ecosystems and to use mountain resources more wisely. The Platform should, furthermore, serve as a contribution to debate in the General Assembly of the United Nations and to the achievement of the Millennium Goals[1].

## 2. Background

The Bishkek Mountain Platform builds on the rich experience embodied in documents on sustainable mountain development, beginning with Chapter 13, "Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development", of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The ensuing process culminated in the International Year of Mountains, which was initiated by the Government of the Kyrgyz

[1] To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger: the stated overall goal is to reduce the proportion of people living on less than $1 a day to half the 1990 level by 2015 — from 29 percent of all people in low and middle income economies to 14.5 percent. If achieved, this would reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty to 890 million (or to 750 million if growth stays on track)

- To achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Build a global partnership for development

Republic. The objectives of the Year are to "promote the conservation and sustainable development of mountain regions, thereby ensuring the wellbeing of mountain and lowland communities." In preparation for, and during, the Year, many meetings on different aspects of sustainable mountain development have been held (cf. list in Annex 1),* and their resolutions and declarations have also contributed to the Platform. A series of thematic papers, prepared for the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit by international specialists and developed further through electronic consultations, have also contributed to the Platform. Furthermore, it takes into consideration the recommendations of paragraph 40 of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002.

## 3. Challenges

Mountain areas cover 26 percent of the Earth's land surface and host 12 percent of its people. Mountains provide vital resources for both mountain and lowland people, including fresh water for at least half of humanity, critical reserves of biodiversity, food, forests and minerals. They are culturally rich and provide places for the physical and spiritual recreation of the inhabitants of our increasingly urbanised planet.

The people of mountain areas face major challenges. About half of the world's approximately 700 million mountain inhabitants are vulnerable to food shortages and chronic malnutrition. Mountain people, particularly disadvantaged groups such as women and children, suffer more than others from the unequal distribution of assets and from conflicts.

Policy decisions influencing the use of mountain resources are generally made in centres of power far from mountain communities, which are often politically marginalized and receive inadequate compensation for mountain resources, services and products. Mountain ecosystems are exceedingly diverse but fragile because of their steep slopes, altitude and extreme landscapes. Many of these ecosystems are being degraded because farmers are forced to apply unsustainable agricultural practices and by inappropriate development.

Climate change, natural hazards and other forces also threaten the complex webs of life that mountains support. The consequences of poverty and environmental degradation reach far beyond mountain communities, through war, terrorism, refugee migration, loss of human potential, drought, famine, and escalating numbers of landslides, mudslides, catastrophic floods and other natural disasters in highlands and lowlands. Moreover, the rapid melting of mountain glaciers and degradation of watersheds is reducing the availability of life-sustaining water and increasing the potential of conflict over dwindling supplies.

* Annex not included.

## 4. Declaration

We, the participants in the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, the culminating global event of the International Year of Mountains, pledge our long-term commitment and determination to achieving the goals of sustainable development in mountain areas. We are committed to protecting the Earth's mountain ecosystems, eliminating poverty and food insecurity in mountain areas, promoting peace and economic equity, and providing support for current and future generations of mountain people – women and men, girls and boys – to create the conditions in which they can shape their own goals and aspirations.

## 5. Guiding principles

We support participatory, multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary, eco-regional, decentralized and long-term approaches that respect the principles of subsidiarity, human diversity, human rights, gender equity and the environment. We value and build upon both indigenous and scientific information and knowledge.

## 6. Framework for action

We call on the United Nations and its organizations, countries, international and non-governmental organizations, businesses, grassroots organizations, scientists and individuals to jointly invest their resources in mountain areas. We also call on financial institutions, including the GEF, to continue and increase their support. It will take all of us, working in partnership, to achieve our goals. We see this framework as guidance for coming decades, recognizing that the details will be developed by partners.

### 6.1. Actions at the international level

United Nations Resolution:
We suggest that the International Year of Mountains Focus Group of the United Nations develop a United Nations resolution on sustainable development in mountain regions. The resolution might provide guidance for the United Nations and its agencies to develop policies and programmes in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Platform, and invite further cooperation and enhancement of actions in mountain regions worldwide. Furthermore, we encourage the Focus Group to highlight the vital inter-relationships between mountains and freshwater resources, particularly in the context of the International Year of Freshwater 2003, and to consider the establishment of a World Mountain Day.

International Partnership:
We support the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, a 'type 2' outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002. We welcome the offer of FAO to host the secretariat of the Partnership and bring the Inter-Agency Working Group on Mountains to its service. We call on UNEP to ensure

vironmentally sound management in mountain regions, in particular in developing countries, strengthening environmental networking and assessments, facilitating regional agreements d encouraging public-private sector cooperation. We count on the continuing and increasing volvement of UNDP, UNESCO, UNU, other United Nations agencies, multilateral velopment banks, other international organizations and countries.

e structure and working modalities will be further elaborated to ensure an effective rtnership. We invite interested organizations and countries to join the Partnership and ensure financial sustainability.

e welcome the proposal to create, within the context of the Partnership, an international twork of Developing Mountain States and Regions, and support the establishment of a rking group for its further elaboration.

pacity development:
e believe that capacity development at all levels is essential to improve the competence of untain stakeholders and to enhance understanding of mountain processes, problems, needs, portunities and assets. This should involve all sectors of education, NGOs, governments, cision-makers and international agencies.

ience and technology:
e invite the scientific community and its funding agencies, at international and national vels, to promote international partnerships and programmes of research, monitoring and early rning in support of sustainable development in mountain regions. We particularly emphasize t initiatives should focus on biophysical as well as political, social, economic and cultural pects, and that they apply disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, ereby contributing to integrated understanding of problems and opportunities for sustainable untain development.

2. Actions at the regional (supra-national) level

gional focus:
e are convinced that transboundary mountain regions have specific environmental, social, litical, cultural and economic characteristics and potential for development and therefore quire specific approaches and resources.

gional cooperation:
e urge that development and conservation in transboundary mountain regions and between stream and downstream stakeholders be coordinated between all partners affected or volved.

Regional agreements:
We support formal instruments such as charters, conventions and integrated policies to foster international cooperation between states sharing mountain areas.

6.3. Actions at the national level

Governance:
We call upon national governments to apply the principle of subsidiarity by delegating political decisions to the lowest possible level of decision-making, from national to sub-national to community, corporate and private responsibilities.

Policy advocacy:
We invite national governments to develop legislation, policies and procedures in favour of their mountain areas, particularly those that are marginalized in terms of economic and social development, and to set their national priorities accordingly. We also invite political parties and governments to become involved with international initiatives, provided that these are accepted at the local level.

Mountain-specific data:
We recognize that the lack of spatially disaggregated socio-economic and environmental data hampers the recognition and specific analysis of mountain livelihood issues. We encourage governments to produce, publish and use mountain-specific data to improve policies for sustainable mountain development, especially in relation to dominant lowland economies.

Investment and compensation mechanisms:
We are convinced that economic disparities between mountains and their surrounding areas can be reduced through investment and other means. We encourage governments to introduce compensation mechanisms for goods and services provided by mountain communities, enterprises or natural and cultural landscapes through negotiations between affected people and beneficiaries.

Providing access:
We recognize that the physical nature of mountain regions hinders access in many ways. In particular, we call upon governments to use information and communications technologies to bring benefits to mountain people.

6.4. Actions at the local level

Local stewardship:
We support local governance and ownership of resources, individual freedom, cultural self-determination, and traditional belief systems, which lie at the core of sustainable development in mountain areas, especially where the economic influence of external forces is high.

Local development:
We urge all stakeholders to ensure that local livelihoods are improved, economic enterpreneurship is fostered and that environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources is guaranteed. External partners should seek to support local initiatives when requested to do so.